



MARAD Update



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DOT and MARAD Observe National Maritime Day 2006

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Hundreds gathered in the courtyard of U.S. Department of Transportation headquarters in the District of Columbia, May 22, for a special ceremony to begin a day of observances and activities in honor of National Maritime Day 2006.

At the morning ceremony, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta and Acting Deputy Maritime Administrator and Chief Counsel Julie Nelson offered remarks and presented the Merchant Marine Medal for Outstanding Achievement to representatives of the crews and operating companies of the MARAD ships that supported relief and recovery efforts from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"The Ready Reserve Force ships brought in emergency cargo, generated electricity, helped restore port activities and provided shelter and meals to relief workers," said Secretary Mineta. "Their hard work was nothing short of extraordinary. Teamwork was vital to the effort, and so today, we would like to honor their spirit of cooperation by awarding the Merchant Marine Medal for Outstanding Achievement to 28 seafarers for their leadership following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Through dedication and determination, these men and women came together to give aid to Gulf Coast recovery and rescue, and in doing so helped replace confusion with cooperation and heartbreak with hope."

Serving as the event's master of ceremonies was Kevin Krick, MARAD's Senior Advisor for Maritime Policy. The day also marked Mr. Krick's final day of service to MARAD, and he received farewell accolades from both Secretary Mineta and Ms. Nelson during their remarks.

Guest speakers included U.S. Coast Guard Vice Adm. Harvey E. Johnson, Jr., Deputy Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Tom Atkin, Assistant to the Coast Guard Chief of Staff.

Bosun Barbara Shipley, Cape Florida, receiving the Merchant Marine Medal for Outstanding Achievement from Acting Deputy Maritime Administrator and Chief Counsel Julie Nelson and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta.



(Photos by Ella Thomas)

During his remarks, Secretary Mineta thanked merchant mariners who served the nation during World War II, the Korean and Vietnam conflicts and Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The Secretary also recognized the efforts of MARAD's Ready Reserve Force during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as the fleet staff worked together to quickly move needed supplies to the Gulf Coast region and move "people out of harm's way."

After his remarks, Secretary Mineta and Ms. Nelson presented more than two dozen individual awards to mariners being recognized. Each awardee was acknowledged by enthusiastic applause and best wishes from scores of smiling audience members.

The ceremony concluded with the traditional sounding of eight bells, signifying the end of one watch aboard ship and the beginning of another.

Other National Maritime Day 2006 activities included a special mass and Day of Prayer and Remembrance for Seafarers at Saint Dominic Church in the District. Events conducted at the Washington Navy Yard included a Propeller Club/King's Point Alumni Club joint luncheon, a wreath-laying ceremony, the National Maritime Day Forum and a reception, both sponsored by the North American Maritime Ministries Association.



Left to Right: Billy Greer, MARAD Central Region; Bob Babin, MARAD Central Region; First Engineer Tom Gabriel, Cape Knox; Dee Varshney, MARAD Central Region; and Capt. Samuel Stephenson, Sirius at headquarters before the ceremony.